

Invitation to symposium on Fatherhood Research in Australia

Researchers examining fathers, fathering or fatherhood are invited to contribute to a Symposium on Fatherhood Research in Australia to be held at the University of Newcastle, NSW on 20th July 2016..

Changing social constructions of family and the role of fathers, their contribution to parenting and involvement in the care and education of infants and children are accepted generally by professionals and the public and yet there remain major gaps in our understanding fathering, and we lack effective ways in which to engage with fathers.

Participants will be expected to present a brief account of their research (details to be decided closer to the event) and to participate in discussion on future directions for research in this area. The Symposium, under the auspices of the Family Action Centre, School of Health Sciences in the Faculty of Health and Medicine will provide transport to and from airports or rail, morning tea and lunch. Billets can be arranged for those who decide to stay in Newcastle overnight.

Indicate your interest in participating in the Symposium by emailing
Richard.fletcher@newcastle.edu.au

Kind regards
Richard Fletcher

Symposium on Fatherhood Research in Australia: Where are we up to? Where to now?

In 2005, as part of the Fatherhood Research Report, we brought together researchers to assess the state of knowledge about fathers. This report was the first comprehensive account of published research on the subject of fatherhood in Australia. The report found that while 'fathers and family separation' had received considerable attention questions surrounding father's role in maintaining their families, or how they influence the development of infants and children remain largely unanswered for Australian populations; this was especially the case for marginalised groups such as Indigenous, gay and young fathers. Research was also meagre on fathers facing special difficulties because of their own physical or mental disability, family poverty or substance abuse and the effects of fathering on conditions that may be suffered by children also had not been well studied.

At that time, only a limited number of researchers had fathers as a significant component of their research activities. Since 2005 a groundswell of interest in fathers, both in Australia and internationally, has led to increased recognition of the gaps in our understanding of male parenting. We are proposing in 2016 to invite those who are actively engaged in researching fathers to come together to discuss, not only the evidence that is currently available from the journal articles and books produced by Australian researchers on the topics of fathers and fatherhood but to compare perspectives and plans and to seek to build collaborative approaches to primary, applied and translational research projects.

The results of our symposium will be edited and may be published as a special edition of the Fatherhood Research Bulletin.